

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4113

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5153

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL MILITARY SITUATION

REF: A. LISBON 5122 DTG 031530Z SEPT 75;

B. LISBON 5128 DTG 031646Z SEPT 75

SUMMARY: NAVY ASSEMBLY MET UNDER CHAIRMANSHIP OF AZEVEDO BUT HAS NOT RELEASED WORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN. THERE IS NO DECISION YET ON POSSIBLE POSTPONEMENT OF AFM ASSEMBLY. WE HAVE HEARD THAT ARMY CHIEF FABIAO MAY BE UNDER PRESSURE FROM PRESIDENT TO LOBBY FOR CONVENING ASSEMBLY ON SCHEDULE AND AS PRESENTLY STRUCTURED. COMMUNIST PRESS IS CONTINUING CAMPAIGN AGAINST ANTUNES GROUP. PRESS HAS PUBLISHED SOARES' TOUGH AND WELL
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REASONED LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OUTLINING HIS CONDITIONS FOR

JOINING THE GOVERNMENT. AZEVEDO IS MEETING WITH THE PCP, PPD, AND PS IN EFFORT TO WORK OUT PACT OF UNDERSTANDING IN ORDER TO FORM COALITION GOVERNMENT BUT NOTHING WILL HAPPEN UNTIL MILITARY HAS RESOLVED THE GONCALVES QUESTION. END SUMMARY

1. THE POLITICAL MILITARY SITUATION AS OF NOON, SEPT 4 FOLLOWS:

2. NAVY AFM ASSEMBLY: THE NAVY AFM ASSEMBLY WAS HELD SEPT 3 WITH GREAT SECRECY IN CONTRAST TO THE ARMY ASSEMBLY OF SEPT 2. CONTRARY TO EXPECTATION AND PRESS REPORTS, ASSEMBLY WAS CHAIRED BY AZEVEDO (WHO IS STILL NAVY CHIEF) AND NOT ROSA COUTINHO. NO OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE HAS BEEN ISSUED BY THE NAVY YET, ALTHOUGH THE ASSEMBLY DID ISSUE A THREAT TO "JORNAL NOVO" TO QUIT PUBLISHING MATERIAL "OFFENSIVE TO THE PRESTIGE AND DIGNITY" OF THE NAVY UNDER THREAT OF "REVOLUTIONARY ACTION." "JORNAL NOVO" PUBLISHED AN ATTACK ON INFORMATION MINISTER CDR JESUINO ON SEPT 2 AND A HUMOROUS FOTOMONTAGE OF AZEVEDO ON SEPT 3. WE EXPECT NAVY ASSEMBLY TO HAVE SUPPORTED GONCALVES AND PRESENT AFM ASSEMBLY STRUCTURE, ALTHOUGH NAVY OFFICERS ARE BY NO MEANS UNANIMOUSLY BEHIND NAVY'S RADICAL LEADERSHIP.

3. AFM ASSEMBLY: THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL WORD YET ON THE POSTPONEMENT OF THE AFM ASSEMBLY SCHEDULED FOR FRIDAY, ALTHOUGH THERE IS RUMOR THAT IT WILL BE HELD SEPT 9. WE UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, FROM ONE RELIABLE SOURCE THAT ARMY CHIEF FABIAO, A VACILATOR WHO STRONGLY SUPPORTED PRO-ANTUNES GROUP LINE DURING THE ARMY ASSEMBLY, MAY BE WAVERING UNDER PRESSURE FROM THE PRESIDENT. THERE ARE REPORTS THAT FABIAO IS LOBBYING FOR CONVENING THE ASSEMBLY AS PRESENTLY STRUCTURED ON SCHEDULE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT OF THE 46 VOTES IN THE ARMY ASSEMBLY FOR GONCALVES, 40 ARE ARMY DELEGATES TO THE AFM ASSEMBLY. IF ASSEMBLY IS NOT RESTRUCTURED IT WILL RETAIN ITS PRO-GONCALVES AND PRO-COMMUNIST MAJORITY.

4. PRESS CAMPAIGN: COMMUNIST-LINING MORNING DAILIES DOWNPLAYED THE ARMY ASSEMBLY VOTE AGAINST GONCALVES, WHICH WAS EXTENSIVELY COVERED IN THE MORE INDEPENDENT EVENING PAPERS OF SEPT 3. A DELIBERATE MISINFORMATION CAMPAIGN DIRECTED AGAINST THE ANTUNES GROUP SEEMS TO BE UNDERWAY (REFTEL). BOTH MORNING PAPERS GAVE CONFIDENTIAL

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HEAVY PLAY TO AN ALLEGED COMPLAINT BY THE MILITARY IN ANGOLA CONCERNING THE LEGITIMACY OF THE REPRESENTATIVES TO THE ARMY AFM FROM ANGOLA. CHECKS BY THE AAIRA ON SIMILAR CHALLENGES TO THE STATEMENTS BY AF CHIEF MORAIS DA SILVA HAVE SUGGESTED

THAT NEWSPAPERS HAVE BLOWN SUCH REPORTS WAY OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE NUMBERS REPRESENTED (REF B). THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICIAL DENIAL THAT MORAIS DA SILVA HAD BEEN REPLACED RECEIVED GRUDGING

PLAY IN "O SEculo," THE PAPER THAT HAD CLAIMED YESTERDAY THAT SILVA WAS FIRED.

5. IN A RELATED DEVELOPMENT, COMMUNIST-LINING "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" HAS REACTED VERY NERVOUSLY TO DEMONSTRATION PLANNED SEPT 4 IN SUPPORT OF THE 23 JOURNALISTS PURGED (REF A). PS AND PPD HAVE ANNOUNCED THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE DEMONSTRATION.

6. PARTY DEVELOPMENTS:

PRESS PUBLISHED IN FULL SOARES' TOUGH AND WELL REASONED LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT. EMBASSY WILL SENT SEPTTEL WITH HIGHLIGHTS IN ADDITION TO WHAT WE REPORTED IN REFTTEL (B). PPD IS EXPECTED TO COME OUT SOON WITH AN EQUALLY TOUGH PUBLIC POSITION ON THEIR TERMS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT.

7. AZEVEDO AND POLITICAL PACT: IN THE MEANTIME, AZEVEDO HAS BEEN MEETING WITH THE PCP, PPD, AND PS TO BRING ABOUT A PACT OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THOSE PARTIES SO THAT THEY CAN JOIN A COALITION GOVERNMENT. ONE COMMENTATOR SUGGESTED THAT WHAT IS NEEDED BEFORE THE PACT IS A "NON-AGGRESSION TREATY."

8. COMMENT: AZEVEDO'S CIRCUS HAS BEEN MOVED TO A SIDE RING AS THE AFM ASSEMBLY TAKES OVER IN THE CENTER. THE EFFORTS OF AZEVEDO TO PUT TOGETHER A GOVERNMENT WILL GET NOWHERE UNTIL THE MILITARY HAVE RESOLVED THE QUESTION OF GONCALVES AND COMMUNIST INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY AT THIS JUNCTURE THAT ANY MEANINGFUL AGREEMENT AMONG THE PARTIES CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE PS POSITION. PCP HAS BEEN UNUSUALLY QUIET IN THE PAST FEW DAYS AND MAY BE CONTEMPLATING A NEW LINE. IT HAS, FOR EXAMPLE, NOT MADE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FOR GONCALVES ALTHOUGH ITS MDP SATELLITE HAS DONE CONFIDENTIAL

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SO AND
THE COMMUNIST-LINING PRESS CONTINUES TO SUPPORT GONCALVES VOCALLY.

9. A POSSIBLE REVERSAL BY ARMY CHIEF FABIAO ON QUESTION OF AFM ASSEMBLY WOULD BE MAJOR SETBACK FOR THE ANTUNES FORCES -- BUT NOT UNEXPECTED. ANTUNES NINE HAVE BEEN WORRIED ALL ALONG ABOUT KEEPING HIM ON BOARD.
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